US Army Corps of Engineers ®
St. Louis District

Flood Risk Management
Quick Sheet

Flood Risk Management

The St. Louis District's flood risk management system is comprised of three major components: urban levees or floodwalls, agricultural levees and multi-purpose reservoirs.

Urban levees are built high to protect cities and towns against floods of great magnitude. *Agricultural levees* are smaller levees that provide relatively lower levels of protection to thousands of acres of cropland against more frequent, less severe floods. There are over 700 miles of levee structures within the St. Louis District, protecting approximately 578,365 acres.

Multi-purpose reservoirs are an important part of the flood risk management system. They provide flood storage capacity and support other Corps' missions, such as water supply, hydropower, environmental stewardship and recreation. During the Great Flood of 1993, the water held back by Army Corps reservoirs decreased the crest in St. Louis by four feet.

When performance of a flood damage reduction system is evaluated, all components must be considered and evaluated as a whole system and not as separate features. Since 1960 the overall system has prevented more than $11 billion in damages within the St. Louis District.

As a Federal leader in Flood Risk Management, it is our vision to provide and sustain a comprehensive flood risk reduction system within the St. Louis District watershed boundaries that reliably minimizes risk to lives and property damage.

Federal, Non-Federal, Private

Federal levees are built by the Army Corps and then turned over to the sponsor (city, county, levee district) for operation and maintenance.

Non-Federal levees are built by a public entity or are publicly sponsored. Non-Federal levees must be built to the Corps standard level of protection and pass an eligibility inspection to qualify for federal funding in case of damage.

Private levees, built by private concerns, are typically built to a lower level of protection than Corps standards, although some private levees may meet or exceed Corps standards. If an eligibility inspection is requested and passed, private levees can be eligible for federal funding if damages occur.

Public Law 84-99

Public Law 84-99 is the authority by which the Army Corps of Engineers responds to emergencies within the District boundary. Under PL 84-99 authorities are delegated to the Corps Districts for disaster preparedness, emergency operations, rehabilitations, emergency water supplies and drought assistance, advance measures and hazard mitigation. The St. Louis District encompasses approximately 28,000 square miles, almost equally divided between Illinois and Missouri, and ten riverine watersheds.

Eighty-nine levees in the St. Louis District participate in the PL 84-99 program. Inclusion in the program requires submittal of as-built drawings and current geotechnical and survey information, as well as an onsite inspection by Army Corps engineers and specialists.

Once accepted into the program, levee districts must pass annual operation and maintenance inspections with an acceptable or minimum acceptable rating. If the levee district maintains its eligibility, the levee district qualifies for federal funds to repair damages that occur to the levee during a declared federal emergency.

Flood Fight Teams

The St. Louis District has seven flood fight teams assigned to watershed sectors within the District's area of responsibility. Flood fight teams are activated once river stages reach a pre-determined level. They provide technical assistance to effected levee districts and act as a liaison between the District's emergency operations center and impacted communities. The District's Readiness Branch ensures that the teams remain properly staffed and ready for emergency response.

FEMA Floodplain maps

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is responsible for administering the National Flood Insurance Program. The NFIP is an agreement between the Federal government and local communities and has three components: flood risk mapping, floodplain management and flood insurance availability.

Flood Insurance Risk Maps are used to manage development with the goal of reducing risk. Many FIRMS across the country were published in the late 1970s and early 1980s. FEMA is in the midst of a multi-year, $1 billion map modernization effort to update all floodplain maps across the country.

The goal is to provide up-to-date, accurate flood risk info to the public, provide data so individuals and communities can make informed risk management decisions and promote and enhance public safety.